



## **National Assembly for Wales Commission (Assembly Commission)**

**Have your say and help us develop  
our Single Equalities Scheme**

**Celebrating Difference...**

## **Message from the Presiding Officer and Chief Executive**

The Assembly Commission is committed to promoting equalities and providing accessible services. As an organisation we employ staff, provide services for Assembly Members and provide information and services to the public.

In doing this, we want to guarantee equality and accessibility for all staff, Assembly Members and visitors regardless of age, disability, gender/gender identity, race/ethnicity, religion and belief and sexual orientation. As an employer and service provider, our organisation is committed to ensuring that no-one is disadvantaged on these grounds.

We would like your views on action we might need to take to improve equality and access to information, employment opportunities, Assembly proceedings (committees and full meetings of the Assembly) and to our buildings.

Your feedback is valuable and will help us produce a strong Single Equalities Scheme and to identify key areas for action to improve equalities and access in the work of the Assembly Commission. We hope that you will be a part of this vital work and so help us deliver equality and fairness for all.



**Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas**  
Presiding Officer



**Claire Clancy**  
Chief Executive

## **1. Who we are and what we do**

We are the National Assembly for Wales Commission (Assembly Commission) based in Cardiff Bay. We provide the staff, property and resources for the Assembly (60 Assembly Members) to function. We do not deliver public policies for example, health, transport, education etc as this is the role of the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Assembly Commission operates under the guidance and direction of the Presiding Officer and four other Assembly Members which represent the other political parties. Supporting the Assembly involves a range of activities including:

- Providing Assembly Members (AMs) with the accommodation, facilities, equipment and information they need to do their jobs;
- Supporting Assembly Committees and Plenary (full meeting of 60 Assembly Members) by providing procedural, legal and other advice;
- Providing translation, interpretation and reporting services which ensure that the Assembly can operate in English and Welsh; and
- Providing the public with information and education about the work of the Assembly and by arranging visits to and from the Assembly.

## **2. How you can help**

The Assembly Commission is developing a Single Equalities Scheme and would like you to help us identify what we need to do to improve equalities for our staff, the Assembly Members we support and the people who visit and interact with the Assembly. By equalities, we mean making access to what we do fair for everyone.

A summary of this document is available in accessible formats such as: easy read; large print; Braille; Audio; if you need an alternative language other than English or Welsh or have any other requirement, please contact the Equalities Team.

We have included a series of questions below which asks for your views on how we can improve our equalities work. Our priorities for promoting equality within our workforce and improving access for

the public can be found in section seven of this document. You can use these if you wish and/or look at the following questions.

**Please tell us what you think about the following issues:**

### **Access to information**

- Do you know how to find information about the National Assembly for Wales?
- Have you used our website ([www.assemblywales.org](http://www.assemblywales.org))? What was it like? What is easy to use? How could it be improved?
- Should we produce information in languages other than English and Welsh?
- Do you know how to contact your Assembly Member?

### **Access to employment opportunities**

- Do you regularly see our jobs advertised?
- Where would you like to see them advertised?
- What would encourage you to apply for a job with us?
- What would discourage you from applying?

### **Access to proceedings**

- Are you aware that you can watch Assembly meetings? Have you done this? What did you think?
- Are you aware that Assembly meetings can be watched on the internet? Do you know where this is?
- Do you know about the Assembly's petitioning system, where members of the public can ask the Assembly to consider a certain issue?

### **Access to our buildings**

- Have you ever visited the Senedd in Cardiff Bay? You can take a tour of the building, watch proceedings or just come in to enjoy the surroundings and/or visit the café.
- If you have visited the Senedd, what did you think? What could be improved?

## Other Issues

Is there anything else that you feel should be brought to our attention?

## Future Involvement

If you would like to be involved in helping us to identify and meet our equalities objectives now and in the future – please let us know how we can involve you.

### HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

You can use our response form to respond to the consultation if you wish but you can also respond to this consultation in a number of ways by:

<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:equalities.team@wales.gsi.gov.uk">equalities.team@wales.gsi.gov.uk</a>
<b>Letter:</b>	Equalities Team Corporate Unit National Assembly for Wales Commission Cardiff CF99 1NA
<b>Fax:</b>	029 2089 8117
<b>Textphone:</b>	029 2089 8601
<b>Telephone:</b>	029 2089 8204

### When do you need responses by?

We will finish collecting responses on 29 August 2008.

### Responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation

Please tell us if you are responding as an individual or whether your views represent an organisation.

### What will happen to your comments and/or suggestions?

We will prepare a general summary of views that are sent to us. Your suggestions and comments will be taken into consideration when we are finalising our Scheme and identifying priority actions for the Action Plan. The Scheme will be published in October 2008 and will be available on our website.

## **Freedom of Information and Data Protection**

In the event of a request for information submitted under UK legislation, it may be necessary to disclose the information that you provide. This may include information which has previously been removed by the National Assembly for publication purposes.

If you are providing any information, including personal data, which you feel is not suitable for public disclosure, it is up to you to state which parts should not be published, and to provide a reasoned argument to support this. The National Assembly will take this into account when publishing information or responding to requests for information.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SCHEME**

### **3. What is an equalities scheme?**

Our equalities scheme will set out our approach to promoting equalities and human rights as an employer and as an organisation that serves Assembly Members and interacts with the public. The Scheme will cover the following equalities strands: age, disability, gender/gender identity, race/ethnicity, religion/belief and sexual orientation. An action plan will accompany the Scheme and this will list the actions that we have identified to promote equality and improve access to our services.

The Assembly has its own Welsh Language Scheme in place, which reflects the commitment of the Assembly for ensuring equality between Welsh and English. The Scheme meets the requirements of the Welsh Language Act 1993 and has specific monitoring arrangements in place.

### **4. Why are we developing a Single Equalities Scheme?**

- To develop a Scheme that is fit for purpose for our organisation. The Welsh Assembly Government will develop its own Scheme and Action Plan;
- To meet the needs of statutory public sector equality duties (disability, race and gender) and also apply the same principles to other equality strands: age, sexual orientation and religion/belief and also human rights principles;
- To have a Scheme that is complementary to the remit of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission;

- To pre-empt the UK Government's Single Equality Act requirements;
- To look at people as individuals with differing needs who might face multiple disadvantage; and
- To ensure that our organisation has equalities and human rights principles embedded into its work and culture.

### **5. When will the Scheme run?**

Our Equalities Scheme and Action Plan will be available in October 2008 and will run for three years, after which it will be reviewed. The Assembly Commission will also produce an Annual Equalities Report which will provide an update on progress in meeting our actions identified to promote equalities.

The Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee will also scrutinise the Annual Equalities Report and check on progress in meeting our actions each year.

### **6. How are we developing our Scheme and Action Plan?**

We are using a variety of methods and we will continue to collect evidence over the summer to help identify our actions:

#### **Involving our Staff**

- Staff focus groups
- All staff e-mail
- Evidence from our all-staff equalities survey
- Equalities Steering Group meetings
- Suggestions and comments from staff to the Equalities Team
- Feedback from secondees and workplace assignments, particularly those from under-represented groups
- Formal feedback from our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) staff network and Disabled staff network

#### **Seeking the views of Assembly Members and their staff**

- Focus groups and e-mail surveys
- General feedback on the services we provide to Assembly Members
- Feedback from the Assembly Commission on the development of our equalities objectives

- The Assembly's Equality of Opportunity Committee provides annual feedback on the Assembly Commission's progress in meeting its equalities objectives

### **Seeking the views of and consulting with people in Wales**

- Feedback and suggestions from visitors to the Assembly and the Senedd Building
- Working with contacts within under-represented communities to gather evidence and views as to how we can improve our services
- Publicising the consultation in community organisations, in print and online

### **Evidence from Impact Assessments**

- Policies are impact assessed and evidence from this process is used to develop, discard or change a policy

### **Reviewing our Previous Schemes**

- Actions from our previous race, disability and gender equality schemes and action plans are being reviewed and incorporated into our new action plan

## **7. SUGGESTED EQUALITIES OUTCOMES FOR SERVICE AREAS**

### **OPERATIONS**

#### **Human Resources**

Responsibilities include providing a range of HR services, such as the delivery of training and development, internal and external recruitment, performance management, Health and Safety and occupational health. Functions, services or policies relevant to equalities:

- Induction
- HR IT Database
- Recruitment
- Training and development

- Updating and reviewing employment policies
- Dispute resolution arrangements

### **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Human Resources**

- Our vacancies reach those local groups who represent Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities and attract the volume of applications from these groups that reflect the general population with a view to extending this incrementally to the other equality strands
- Staff, Assembly Members and Assembly Members' staff to have an increased awareness of their equalities/human rights responsibilities and the following equalities strands: age, disability, gender/gender identity, race, religion/belief and sexual orientation. Staff, Assembly Members and Assembly Members' staff to have an understanding of the implications of the Equalities Scheme and public sector equality duties
- An organisation where both bullying and harassment are taken seriously and staff are educated about their duties and responsibilities
- Grades are monitored and any gender differentials are addressed
- Employment policies that take account of changing legislative requirements on equalities and human rights
- Improved staff equalities data is available
- Data is collected, logged and easily available from monitoring employment policies
- Our emerging pay strategy has embedded within it the principle of equality
- Employees from under-represented groups feel supported and contribute to the development of policies that might affect them (staff networks)

- Our revised induction arrangements place appropriate emphasis on our equality commitments/duties and these arrangements are shared with AMSS as appropriate
- A pilot scheme promoting work assignments for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people to be introduced and rolled out to other strands pending review of pilot
- Awareness training for the revised PMR system promotes the principle of mainstreaming equality in to individual objectives as appropriate

## **Information and Communications Technology**

Responsibility for managing the ICT and broadcasting services provided to the Assembly Commission. Provides ICT services to Members, their support staff and officials, and ensures that broadcasting facilities are available within the Assembly Commission.

### **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Information and Communications Technology**

- An accessible website that all people, including disabled people, can access easily
- IT equipment is accessible and made available for staff with specific requirements in a timely manner
- Development of new features for the website to enable full and equal public engagement

## **External Communications**

Responsibility for raising public awareness of the powers and work of the National Assembly for Wales. Functions include the delivery of a communications strategy, liaison with the Press and broadcast media on behalf of the Presiding Officer, the Assembly Commission and Committee Chairs, as well as on behalf of the Chief Executive and Clerk.

## **Priority Equalities Outcomes for External Communications**

- Information about the Assembly and its work is accessible to all people
- Assembly publications with images are representative of diverse society in Wales
- People from under-represented groups can access and visit the Senedd
- An increase in BAME and disabled young people's participation from groups in the education centre of the Assembly
- Widened access to under-represented groups at Assembly events over Wales
- People from under-represented groups view and/or engage in proceedings
- Frontline staff that are trained and feel confident in welcoming people with differing needs to the Assembly
- Guided tours of the Senedd which are accessible to visitors with sensory impairments
- Press/media releases are sent to organisations that include representative organisations/groups that might represent the equalities interests

## **Financial Services**

The team sets the standards for financial management and awareness in the organisation; processing payments (including payroll) to Assembly Members, their support staff, and Assembly staff; supporting the Commission in the management and accounting of its financial resources; aiming to pay all supplier invoices quickly; and providing an advisory role on procurement and sustainable development. Services to Assembly Members are coordinated through the Members' Business Support teams, covering payroll, Members' allowances budgeting and payments,

and the provision of HR and pensions support to Members and their staff.

### **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Financial Services**

- Our suppliers operate to the highest standard in relation to equalities issues; the supply chain is given a clear indication that equalities is important to us as an organisation and that suppliers would be expected to act accordingly

### **Estates and Facilities Management**

Responsible for managing the Assembly Commission's estate and managing a range of contracts with external service providers. The team provides a wide range of essential services and facilities for both the Assembly building and the Pierhead Building to enable and assist Assembly Members and officials to carry out their duties effectively. These include emergency procedures, accommodation and health and safety.

### **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Estates and Facilities Management**

- Buildings that are safe, accessible, clean environments for staff, contracted staff, Assembly Members, their staff and visitors
- Work spaces for staff, Assembly Members, their staff and other contracted staff that are ergonomic and accessible
- Health and Safety Risk Assessments that take account of equalities and access considerations

### **Security**

Responsible for dealing with all aspects of building and physical security in the Assembly Commission Cardiff Bay buildings.

## Priority Equalities Outcomes for Security

- Security team staff that are professional, trained and feel confident to deal with a diverse range of visitors with differing needs

## ASSEMBLY BUSINESS

The Assembly Business Directorate provides specialist parliamentary support to Members to ensure the efficient and effective conduct of business. In particular, it provides the following services:

**Chamber Service:** management of plenary meetings and provides procedural advice to the Presiding Officers and other Members.

**Committee Service:** provides secretariat support to the Assembly's committees and procedural advice to committee chairs and Members.

**Legislation Office:** provides clerking services for committees established to scrutinise Legislative Competence Orders, Assembly Measures and subordinate legislation and for subsequent plenary stages. It also supports the development of legislative proposals by individual Members.

**Table Office:** provides advice and arbitrates on the admissibility and handling of questions and motions; publishes the Register of Members' Interests; gives guidance on the registration and declaration of interests; and provides support to the Standards Commissioner.

**Members' Research Service:** provides confidential and impartial information and research support to Assembly Members and committees.

**Record of Proceedings:** produces and publishes bi-lingual transcripts of plenary and committee meetings.

**Translation and Interpretation:** ensures the smooth bi-lingual operation of all formal Assembly business.

## **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Assembly Business**

- Members are provided with opportunities to build in equalities considerations to their work in the Assembly and in their constituencies **(Members' Research Service)**
- Research outputs published on the National Assembly for Wales web pages are as accessible as possible **(Members' Research Service)**
- Under-represented groups are consulted accordingly when scrutiny and legislative committees are calling for evidence **(Members' Research Service, Committee Service and Legislation Office)**
- Records of plenary and committee meetings are fully accessible to staff, Assembly Members, and members of the public via the Assembly's website and fully compliant with AA standards **(Translation and Reporting)**
- Equalities considerations are built-in to PTRS recruitment processes (including flexible working, job-share and home working arrangements) **(Translation and Reporting)**
- Interpretation equipment is accessible to all staff, Assembly Members, committee witnesses, visitors and members of the public **(Translation and Reporting)**

## **LEGAL SERVICE DIRECTORATE**

**The Legal Service Directorate provides the following service:**

- Advice on Orders and Measures;
- Advice on legislative competence;
- Scrutiny of Subordinate Legislation and
- Corporate Advice.

## **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Legal Service Directorate**

- The Assembly Commission and Assembly Members to have an increased awareness of their responsibilities in relation to current, equalities legislation

## **CORPORATE UNIT**

The Corporate Unit provides the following services:

- Secretariat services to the Assembly Commission; Corporate Governance Committee and Executive Board;
- Support to the Presiding Officer and Chief Executive;
- Records Management and Freedom of Information;
- Internal Communications; and
- Co-ordination of corporate strategic policies, including equalities.

### **Priority Equalities Outcomes for Corporate Unit**

- An effective Single Equalities Scheme in place that is monitored and progress on achieving our equalities objectives is reported on a regular basis
- Equalities objectives are taken into account in service areas' work/service planning processes
- A Scheme and Action Plan that is reviewed externally on a three-yearly basis and is built into service planning
- New and proposed policies are equalities impact assessed and staff are trained to carry out this process
- Staff and Assembly Members are able to gain quick and accurate advice on equalities, access and human rights issues from the Equalities Team
- A visible Equalities team that promotes and raises awareness of equalities/human rights issues amongst staff, Assembly Members and their staff
- Effective internal and external working relationships/networks in place to inform our work on equalities